



Key Stage 4 Parent Booklet

KS4 Parent information

Introduction

Key Stage 4 is going to be an exciting, yet challenging time for your son. He will encounter GCSE work for the first time and have important decisions to make regarding opportunities such as work experience and college placements. We hope to work closely with you to ensure that they are well prepared to do their very best in all areas of their life and make confident decisions regarding their future and the important next steps in their journey. Attendance is an important part of enabling them to achieve their full potential so we encourage healthy choices such as regular exercise, a healthy diet, good sleeping habits and time to relax. We know from experience that there will be some challenges to overcome over the next two years but the past also highlights just how incredible the young men can be when faced with adversity. I hope the following information helps to prepare you for the next two years but please don't hesitate to make contact if you require additional information.

Contact details

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GCSE work & Pathways

There is an adjustment period in Year 10 as the pupils step up to meet the demands of increasingly challenging GCSE awards. To help enable all our pupils to fulfil their potential the year groups are divided into Pathways for the Core subjects (English, Maths & Science) and for the Foundation subjects they will work with the other students who choose that option. Pathways enable the pupils to work with other pupils of similar ability and learning styles and allow for greater differentiation across the year group. It is important to understand that Pathways do not limit pupil choices when it comes to exam entry. Pathways are designed to enable pupils to receive the appropriate support and challenge for them to achieve their full potential and therefore ensure all options remain open to them.

Homework

Homework is set on a daily basis in Key Stage 4 and we believe it is integral to helping our pupils achieve their full potential. Homework at Sunnydown:

- Supports the work undertaken in the classroom
- Prepares pupils for the GCSE examinations
- Enables parents to engage in the learning process
- Encourages fundamental skills such as time management, organisation and task completion.

Whilst we value the role of homework it is also important to acknowledge that it shouldn't negatively impact on the health of the pupils. Pupils all have different thresholds and require different levels of support. To provide all pupils the opportunity to succeed we offer lunchtime homework clubs for those who need additional support or simply want to go home and relax knowing that it is already complete.

Work experience

Whilst schools no longer have an obligation to incorporate Work Experience placements at KS4 we at Sunnydown value the positive impact it can have and encourage all pupils to take up the opportunity.

The benefits can include:

- An increased understanding of the structure and reality of working life, which is crucial if they are to secure and sustain employment.
- Provides feedback and coaching to enable them to develop skills, including those required in specific jobs and sectors.
- Helps them to make informed choices about their futures and allow them to learn more about specific industries, organisational cultures and job roles.
- Allows them to gain experience of working with people, enhancing their social and communication skills, and awareness of how to present themselves and behave in a work context.
- Provides opportunities to learn about recruitment processes (such as how to do job interviews and how to apply for a job).
- Provides a positive experience of the world of work that builds the young person's confidence and motivation.

Work experience can have an extremely positive impact on classroom performance in year 11 as many of the pupils will have a clearer idea of what they want to do and crucially what they need to attain to achieve their goals.

Work experience is scheduled for Year 10 students either side of the Summer half term break depending on their Form group.

Practice exams

Our **Year 11** GCSE practice exams are scheduled at the end of the Autumn term and provide the pupils with an opportunity to experience the full exam process. They will line up outside and hand in their electronic devices upon entry to the exam room. They will need to be prepared with the appropriate equipment stored in a transparent container/pencil case. The rooms are prepared so that there is no information that could help on display. All the pupils are afforded the full support that they are entitled to in the final exams, which may include readers and/or scribes in some cases. They will work with the same person throughout the exams so that they establish a positive working relationship, which will help to reduce anxieties come May, and the real exams. Practice exams give the pupils the most accurate indication of their current

working levels.

College Placements

We encourage all KS4 students to attend several of the College open days for this academic year to help prepare them for the important next step to life beyond Sunnydown. Having an idea of what they could do after Sunnydown established early can help support the pupils transition on to the important next step in their journey. One of the challenges when choosing the right course is knowing which level to apply for. Please make contact prior to college applications and we will be happy to advise you or alternatively there is guidance available on the Key Stage 4 website. The link below can also be useful to see what is in your area.

<https://www.ucasprogress.com/search>

Revision

In the build up to the exams some schools offer pupils the opportunity to take study leave. We believe that the young men are better served attending school during this important period. To that end their timetable and Teaching staff will remain constant up to the exams. During the exam period itself some pupils prefer to attend only on the days required which is possible however we will continue to run their usual classes so that support is available to them as much as possible.

Exams

A full timetable of exams will be sent home during the Spring term in Year 11.

Graduation evening

Year 11 Graduation evening is held on the evening of the last exam or on occasion the end of that week. Parents and friends are welcome to attend. It is an emotional night so tissues at the ready and is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the students during their time at Sunnydown.

Life after Sunnydown

Okay the sad bit. The reality is that KS4 all happens very quickly and before we know it we are waving goodbye to the young men and wishing them good luck in their futures. The good news is that once you are part of the Sunnydown family you will always be welcome back. Over the last 2 years we have been developing our Sunnydown Alumni activity and events, increasing the opportunity for the lads and families to stay in touch. This year will hopefully see the 7th instalment of the Alumni Charity bike ride from Sunnydown to the top of Box Hill. This event occurs in the summer term and all year 11 leavers are invited to take part in the event including ex-

pupils. The first 6 events have been a fantastic success and as well as being a great day on the bikes with the boys we have collectively raised over £2500 for the CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) Charity, which is close to our hearts at Sunnydown.

We have 2 ex-pupils currently employed at Sunnydown and a further 2 volunteer their time on days when they are not in college. Sunnydown leavers are able to offer a valuable insight to life at college and we are inviting the Alumni to come back and talk to the year 9's 10's and 11's regarding their experiences at their respective colleges.